



## St. Andrew's UMC Oxford, Mississippi Safe Sanctuary Policy

### **Introduction/Purpose**

As part of the United Methodist Church, we believe Jesus instructs us to care for His youth and children. We, as a church family, strive to commit to the practice of safe supervision within our church. Along with other United Methodist congregations, we set forth this policy to help prevent youth/child abuse and to help keep all children participating in our programs and activities safely. We, at St. Andrew's UMC, pledge to conduct the church in a manner that will further the spiritual growth of our children and youth, while still remaining in a safe environment.

### **Statement of Covenant**

The St. Andrew's United Methodist Church of Oxford, Mississippi hereby pledges to conduct the ministry of Jesus Christ in ways that assure the physical and emotional safety and spiritual growth of all of our children and youth as well as all of our workers with children and youth. We will follow reasonable safety measures when selecting and recruiting workers; we will implement prudent operational procedures in all areas of programming and care, we will train our workers with children and youth on our procedures and policies; and we will have a clearly defined procedure for reporting a suspected incident of abuse or neglect that conforms to the requirements of Mississippi law.

## **I. EXPECTATIONS AND LOCAL IMPLEMENTATION**

This policy sets forth statements of general expectations and guidelines of behavior for ordained and lay people in the church when engaged in ministry with children and youth. The purpose of this policy is to create safe and welcoming spaces for all children and youth in our communities and those engaged in ministry with children and youth and to prevent sexual abuse, or abuse of any kind. St. Andrew's leadership understands this policy thoroughly enough to make appropriate judgments about special circumstances. Any additions or revisions must be submitted in writing for the approval of the St. Andrew's Administrative Council. Church leaders should make appropriate judgments, and should consult with the pastor, or church conference leadership, when unanticipated situations arise. See Appendix A for a definition of terms.

## II. APPLICATION AND SCREENING

The hiring process for any full-time, part-time, or temporary positions of St. Andrew's Methodist Church, will include posting of position, screening of applicants, and a ranking process. Once the top candidate has been chosen, reference checks will be conducted. References must be work-related and must not be a relative of the candidate.

### **FULL-TIME, PART-TIME, AND TEMPORARY EMPLOYMENT**

These positions may include the following:

- Pastor
- Administrative Secretary
- Chancel Choir Director
- Organist
- Pianist
- Accompanist
- Children's Director
- Children's Music Director
- Youth Director
- Nursery Worker
- Custodian

This list could be reduced or could grow depending on the needs and budget of the church.

Applicants for positions involving direct contact with children and youth have age requirements. The Children's Director must be at least 18 years of age and must receive competent oversight by a qualified adult, such as an adult serving as children's committee chair. Active participation in St. Andrew's or another United Methodist Church over the past six months is preferred.

Applicants for Youth Director must be at least 21 years of age in order to be considered for hire. Active participation in St. Andrew's or another United Methodist Church over the past six months is preferred.

After an adequate candidate pool has been established, the Staff Parrish Committee shall rank the candidates. As part of the ranking process, the Chair of the Staff Parrish Committee should take into consideration input provided by any committee chairs, which will have a working relationship with the new hire, i.e. if a Youth Director candidate is being interviewed, then input from the Youth Committee should be taken into consideration.

The interview process shall be conducted by the Staff Parrish Committee. Should the candidate's interview be positive and successful, then the committee shall contact the three (3) references submitted by the chosen candidate. Provided all feedback from the references places the candidate in a favorable light, a verbal offer can be made to the candidate pending a successful background check. The candidate must agree in writing (electronic email is acceptable) to a qualified background check, as dictated by policy based

on the type position to be filled. Once consent has been given, the Staff Parrish Committee Chair shall initiate the applicable background check(s) and must report the results to the Staff Parrish Committee, all of which is to be kept confidential. Once the background check results are provided and upon satisfactory review of these results and consultation with the pastor, the Staff Parrish Committee Chair may then submit an offer in writing to the candidate. If accepted, the hire will proceed upon presentation of official documents by the candidate, including (1) an original social security card, and (2) a driver's license, which has not expired. If no social security card is available, a passport will be accepted in place of the Social Security card.

The Staff Parish Committee shall use a background check/screening provider, which has been approved by the Administrative Council. The type of screening done will depend on the responsibilities of the position and may consist of the following:

### **Types of Screening:2**

1. Public Records Screening – Criminal public records, to include criminal records and sex offender registries;
2. Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) – if the position may require the employee to transport children and/or youth as part of, or an extension of, ministry of the church;
3. Credit Check – if the position requires check signing authority;
4. Drug Screening.

Congregations must keep and maintain all application and screening records secure and confidential in the church office. This includes a signature of each new hire verifying receipt of a copy of this policy.

### **VOLUNTEER POSITIONS**

All volunteers serving in a ***supervisory capacity*** for children and youth shall:

- Be at least 18 years of age (or be active in St. Andrew's Youth Program for VBS, volunteer only);
- Complete an information form;
- Demonstrate an active relationship with their local church for at least six months prior to serving in a supervisory capacity;
- Be interviewed by the Youth Director or the Children's Director, whichever applicable;
- And, consent to a national criminal records check and a driver's license record check, if they will be driving youth or children to/from St. Andrew's programs.

All volunteers serving in a ***helping capacity*** for children shall:

- Complete a basic orientation/training provided by the Children's Director, or one of the co-directors;
- Consent to a driver's license record check if expected to chaperone and/or drive. In the event a substitute worker needs to be brought in under last-minute circumstances, that person must:

- Complete a basic orientation/training provided by the children's director, or one of the co-directors, before actually beginning work, which may consist of serving as a chaperone during day trips or on church premises with regard to group activities, but not driving.

### III. EDUCATION AND TRAINING

#### A. Children's Ministry

Class Assignment: One of the primary goals of St. Andrew's Methodist Church is the Christian Education of our children. Accordingly, St. Andrew's provides two (2) programs specifically directed towards and for the benefit of our children.

**Kaleidoscope** exists and serves children ages 3 to 11, or those children who are enrolled through the Sixth (6<sup>th</sup>) grade in our local school districts. Assignments in the Kaleidoscope Program shall be made by the Director of the Children's Program with the advice and consent of the Children's Committee. Normally, the child's age as of September 1<sup>st</sup>, of the current year, will be the determining factor and shall be conclusive regarding eligibility. In the case of home-schooled children, then age shall be the exclusive determining factor regarding eligibility.

**Youth** exists and serves older children ages 12 to 18, or those children who are enrolled in the seventh (7<sup>th</sup>) through the twelfth (12<sup>th</sup>) grade in our local school districts. Assignment in the Youth Program shall be made by the Director of the Youth Program with the advice and consent of the Youth Committee. Normally, the child's age as of September 1<sup>st</sup> of the current year shall be the determining factor and shall be conclusive regarding eligibility.

In the situation where a child has reached the age of an Adult as defined herein, but continues to be enrolled as a graduating senior in high school at one of our local school districts, then that child shall continue to be eligible to participate in St. Andrew's Youth Program. However, once a child becomes an adult and is no longer enrolled as a graduating senior in high school, then that child shall be officially moved to the next successive program, should one exist or to an adult Sunday School Class.

#### B. Training

Training shall be appropriate to each person's function according to the Application and Screen policy.

All Leaders shall have Universal Training that fosters a culture of safety and inclusion for all people and covers a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries. Universal Training is designed to equip all

people to live out the Baptismal Covenant. All members of St. Andrew's shall have access to this training.

In addition to Universal Training, all Supervisors including, but not limited to, the Pastor, the Youth Director(s), the Youth Committee Chair, the Children's Director(s), the Children's Committee Chair, and the Vacation Bible School (VBS) Chairperson shall have Specialized Training that relates to the following areas:

1. Prevention, identification, and response to all forms of abuse and neglect;
2. Vulnerability within the pastoral relationship;
3. An introduction to gender non-binary;
4. The needs of LGBTQ+ children and youth;
5. And, the ways that children and youth can engage in self-advocacy.

Certification of training shall be renewed every 5 years and evidence of training completion (completion certificate) shall be maintained in the files of the church office after training is complete.

#### **IV. MONITORING AND SUPERVISION OF PROGRAMS**

The Children's and Youth Committees shall monitor and supervise the behavior of adults, children, and youth to ensure appropriate behavior and healthy boundaries. Such supervision shall review the scope, accountability, and responsibility of the ministry with the person engaged in the ministry.

The Staff Parrish Committee, along with the Pastor, shall ensure that all people who minister to children and youth receive prior training as to the scope, accountability, and responsibility of the ministry. The Church Secretary shall maintain an up-to-date list of persons with their contact information approved to minister to children and youth. This list shall be kept in the church office.

##### **A. Two Adults Required**

There shall be at least two adults present for events designated for children. There shall be at least two adults present at events designated for youth and in this case, at least one of the adults must be at least two years older than the eldest participant. However, only one adult may be sufficient in well-monitored, visually accessible program space on the church grounds, such as a Sunday School classroom.

##### **B. Creating Safe Space for Children and Youth**

To create a safe space, it is necessary to anticipate and avoid circumstances in which children and youth are exposed to inappropriate consumables, materials, unmonitored adult contact, or unsupervised peer contact.

For example:

- **Alcoholic beverages.** Alcohol shall not be stored in publicly accessible areas of the church building.
- **Computers and electronic devices.** Children and youth shall have adequate supervision when using electronic devices belonging to the church. Devices shall have adequate password protection.
- **Unused spaces.** Spaces not in use should not be readily accessible. Classroom doors should be locked when not in use.

### C. **One-to-One Conversations with Children or Youth**

When one-to-one conversations occur between an adult and a child, another unrelated adult is either to be present or capable of visually monitoring the conversation. One-to-one conversations between an adult and a youth are allowed as long as another adult is either present or capable of visually monitoring the conversation.

For example:

- **Planned or unplanned on-site conversations** can take place in a public location, away from where others can hear but in view of other adults.
- **Planned off-site conversations/meetings** can take place in a public (such as a coffee shop or a restaurant) in view of other adults. A Responsible Person shall be informed about the appointment or plans in advance.

Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed if a child or youth discloses a situation pertaining to abuse, neglect, self-harm, or exploitation because of mandatory reporting laws. Impulsive, secluded or secretive activity, online or in person with children or youth, may foster a high-risk situation, and is to be avoided.

### D. **Basic Needs**

No one is to be deprived of the basic human needs of food, drinking water, shelter, sleep, access to restrooms, safety, and clothing at any event. Exceptions may be made for programs intended to teach children or youth about poverty, need, and hunger, such as an intentional fasting program. In these cases, children and youth must agree to participate in writing, and parents or guardians must give written permission that includes certification that the youth or child does not have a medical condition that would put the participant at risk by fasting or missing sleep. Participants who wish to withdraw or who are unable to complete the program must have their basic needs met immediately.

### E. **Inclusiveness**

No one shall be denied rights, status or access to an equal place in the life, worship, and governance of any program or activity because of race, color, ethnic origin, national origin, marital status, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity and expression, differing abilities, or socio-economic class. To the

extent possible, all spaces and settings for programs, activities, and ministry shall be accessible.

#### **F. Behavior Standards for Children and Youth**

All participants in Children and Youth activities shall abide by the following behavioral standards:

- Show respect for everyone with whom you come in contact, by your actions and your words. This includes members of one's group as well as those outside of it.
- No one shall strike, hit or otherwise physically or emotionally threaten or harm anyone at any time.
- Bullying of any kind by anyone is prohibited.
- Respect the facilities (e.g. do not throw or kick balls at the doors or walls; no standing or walking on furniture or chairs; keep your surroundings clean.)
- No obscene language, drugs, alcohol, tobacco, or weapons. (See your Youth Director if you need to take/use prescription medication during Youth events.)
- Public displays of affection are strongly discouraged. This includes "hanging on" someone, excessive hugging, kissing, sharing a seat, or other obviously "romantic" behavior.

Any individual found to be in violation of these behavior standards will be referred to the "Children's Committee" or "Youth Committee" depending on their age. The appropriate committee shall determine if the individual shall remain a part of the children's or youth group or if their continued placement in the group prevents the overall mission of the Children's Ministry.

#### **G. Violence and Weapons**

- No one is to strike, hit, or otherwise physically threaten or harm anyone at any time.
- Children and youth shall not have weapons of any kind at any event or program for children or youth. Exceptions to this restriction may be made for camp programs or other specific programs with prior approval.
- Bullying of any kid by anyone is prohibited.
- Disruptive behavior that prevents the group from participating in lessons/activities on a recurring basis may result in the person responsible being asked to stop participating in the children or youth program.
- Any witnessed actions or suspected violations are to be reported immediately to the pastor, or other leadership so it can be immediately and appropriately addressed. (*See the Responding to Concerns Policy*)

## **H. Behavioral Standards for Adults in Ministry with Children or Youth**

Adults who work with children and youth are expected to model the patterns of healthy relationships that children and youth deserve in all settings. Interactions should meet all requirements outlined above and adults should be discouraged from initiating a private relationship with any unrelated child or youth from the church away from the sanctioned church activities.

### **DOs**

Adults are encouraged to:

- Have ongoing spiritual practices, which might include: daily prayer, regular participation in church, and Bible study;
- Spend time with and listen to children and youth, and advocate for their ministry within the Body of Christ;
- Offer appropriate physical expressions of care which may include:
  - a. high fives and fist bumps;
  - b. hand-holding while walking with small children or in prayer;
  - c. brief touching of shoulders, hands, or arms;
  - d. brief hugs and arms around shoulders.

### **DON'Ts**

Adults shall not under any circumstances:

- Provide children or youth with non-sacramental alcohol, marijuana, drugs, cigarettes, tobacco products, e-cigarettes, vapes, or pornography;
- Arrive under the influence of alcohol, illegal drugs, or misused legal drugs at any children's or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- Consume non-sacramental alcohol or illegal drugs or misuse legal drugs at any children's or youth event or when they are responsible for children or youth at an event;
- Engage in any sexual, romantic, illicit, or secretive relationship or conduct with any child or youth; or

Anyone who suspects a violation of these policies shall report their concerns to the pastor, or other leadership so it can be immediately and appropriately addressed. (*See the Responding to Concerns Policy*)

## **F. Special Considerations for Off-Site Programming**

Off-site programs, trips, and events are a welcome and often necessary means for spiritual, social, and emotional development of children and youth. They also present additional challenges for maintaining best practices for safe and healthy ministry. The expectations for safe space, as described above, should be observed off-site.

In the event of uncertainty about application of policy, the Responsible Person should contact their Supervisor with the relevant queries.

Because of the unique risks that can't always be anticipated, it is important to obtain permissions and manage documentation as described below.

1. **Prior Approvals** – Prior approval by the pastor and the appropriate committee chair (i.e. for Youth, the Youth Committee Chair), should be provided during the planning phase if possible but no later than 1 week before the departure of the group on their off-site activity. Planning should be done for the year (July 1 – June 30) and bi-annually (July 1 – Dec 31) and (Jan 1 – June 30) for both the Children's Program and the Youth Program.
2. **Registration, Waiver, and Release Forms** – All children, youth, and adults shall complete and sign a registration form and a waiver and release form before participating in any programs. Confidentiality must be preserved with respect to medical and other sensitive information in the forms. Such completed release forms and waiver forms shall be maintained in a secure location on-site or online and retained in church files for no less than one year. Forms are to be shredded or deleted after one year.

Permission Slips shall be provided for each off-site event and shall be signed by the parent/guardian.

Prior permission for a minor to be photographed or recorded on film, videotape, audiotape, or other electronic media is required from a parent or guardian before posting on a website, newsletter, or any other media.

3. **First Aid and Medications** – Current certification in First Aid, CPR, and Automated Defibrillator (AED) is strongly encouraged for those who work with children and youth. A first aid kit, appropriately stocked for the event and for the participants, shall be available in the church office. Within the First Aid kit, a record must be kept for all medication or first aid given to a participant.

This record should include the participant's name, the date, and time of service, the name of the person administering medications or treatment, and a description of the medication, dosage, and/or treatment given. All medications (prescription and over the counter) belonging to minors shall be given to the Responsible Person, unless otherwise agreed upon by the parents and the Responsible Person. Exceptions may include inhalers, Epi-pens, and birth-control pills. Only the Responsible Person, or the adult designee, shall administer medications.

4. **Supervision** – At any gathering of children or youth, there shall be at least two unrelated adults with one being age 25 or older, preferably

reflecting the sex and gender identity of the participants. Minimum ratios of adult to child/youth shall be in accordance with American Camp Association (ACA) guidelines as follows:

- 5 years & younger – 1 adult for each 5 overnight-participants and 1 adult for each 6 day-participants
- 6 to 8 years – 1:6 for overnight and 1:8 for day
- 9 to 14 years – 1:8 for overnight and 1:10 for day
- 15 to 18 years – 1:10 for overnight and 1:12 for day.

Additional adults can provide skills, mentorship, support, encouragement, spiritual guidance, and joy. When you have new leaders-in-training, the leadership teams should also have a reasonable number of experienced adult leaders to provide support.

5. **Insurance** – All trips to off-site destinations must have adequate insurance in case of emergency. For more information, contact your insurance broker.

### **G. Overnight Programs**

In overnight programs, particular attention will be given to historically excluded or unrecognized people, such as LGBTQ+ and differently-abled individuals. In a situation of unequal power and safety, preferences of these individuals merit additional consideration, accommodation, and action to ensure:

- Participant privacy;
- Maximization of social integration of all participants;
- Minimization of stigmatization of any participants;
- Equal opportunity to participate; and
- Safety of all participants.

#### **Other guidelines for overnight programs:**

- The safe use of restrooms and showers by all participants requires congregations to consider numerous factors, including, but not limited to: age, sex, gender identity and expression, and privacy. Adults should have separate showers or separate times for showers.
- Overnight programs shall provide safe, supervised sleeping arrangements.
  - (a) No bed, cot, or sleeping bag shall have more than one person sleeping in it.
  - (b) Supervision by two adults is required in any space where one or more youth are sleeping.
  - (c) It is acceptable for all participants to sleep in the same open area when dressing rooms and bathrooms provide appropriate privacy.

**Best practice guidelines for hotel stays:**

- One child or youth per bed, including cots, pullouts or hide-away-beds, and rollaway beds;
- At least 2 children or 2 youth in each room
- Adult supervisors or chaperones have rooms on the same floor, scattered among the rooms with children or youth, and at least one adult room is by the stairs or elevators;
- Adult leader assigns rooms and room occupants.

**H. Transportation**

For the health and safety of all participants, the following practices shall be followed:

- For events that originate and/or terminate at the congregation's facility, all drivers must be at least 21 years of age and provide a current copy of a driver's license.
- All drivers and riders must comply with state laws including seat belt and cell phone usage.
- Parents/guardians driving personal vehicles are responsible for the transportation and safety of their children and/or youth to and from the event. This responsibility includes the transportation of any other passengers in their vehicle.

**I. Camps and Retreat Centers**

All camps, camping programs, and retreat centers of the United Methodist Church shall follow the guidelines for off-site programming established in this policy. In addition, camps should aim to follow American Camp Association standards to the best of the camp's ability.

**J. Travel**

Travel with children and youth presents amazing opportunities for participants to experience the church and the world on a larger scale with vastly different perspectives of faith communities and their contexts. It also presents challenges to normal safety protocols and opportunities for creativity if managed well. The following policies will help groups prepare for a variety of potential scenarios, as well as for domestic and international travel.

1. **Adult Leaders and Chaperones** – Minimum ratios of adult to youth need to be greater due to the possibility of leaving an adult behind with a participant in the event of a medical emergency.
  - 9 to 14 years – 1:5
  - 15 to 18 – 1:7
  - Preferably, no group should travel with fewer than three adult chaperones; however, one or more chaperones are acceptable for short trips.

- One adult, minimum age 25, should serve as the travel administrator (in the case of the youth group, this would be the youth leader) who is responsible for all aspects of the trip, including carrying all necessary documentation, contacts, and forms including medical releases.
2. **Insurance for Travel** – Short-term trip or supplemental insurance, available through most church policies as an added rider, should be considered. Personal health insurance policy details or other alternative measures should be provided by all participants. Because not all individuals have access to affordable and adequate health insurance, it is recommended that health insurance be added to trip insurance.

## V. RESPONDING TO CONCERNS

### A. Suspected Abuse, Neglect, or Exploitation of Children and Youth

Any Adult who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth has taken place, shall contact the pastor for appropriate follow-up.

In addition, anyone who has reason to suspect that abuse, neglect, or exploitation of children or youth has taken place within a facility or program of the church should immediately inform both of the following:

- The Chair of St. Andrew's Administrative Council
- The Pastor

### B. Suspected Violations of the Above Policy

Anyone who suspects a violation of the above policies shall immediately report the violation to

- The Chair of St. Andrew's Administrative Council
- The Pastor

The Pastor and/or the Chair of the Administrative Council who receive reports of violations of this policy shall be responsible for providing appropriate pastoral care to all those affected and appropriate remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment or unpaid ministry with the church. If the Responsible Person is a layperson, they are responsible to ensure that appropriate pastoral care is provided for all.

### C. Local Resources for Response

Each congregation shall provide a list of local resources that can give information and assistance to anyone concerned about circumstances that may violate this policy. Such resources with contact information shall include

- Responsible Person(s) for programs and ministries with children and youth;
- The Pastor of St. Andrew's

- District Superintendent, New Albany District
- Child Protective Services
- Family Crisis Services of Northwest Mississippi

**D. Children Who are a Danger to Others** (within Youth or Children's Programs)

Any parent, leader, or volunteer who has concerns about their child's, or Children's safety due to threats, bodily harm, or attempted bodily harm from another child shall contact one and/or all of the following:

- Leader of the group (i.e. Director of Children's Program or Youth Program)
- Chair of the group's committee (i.e. Children Program Chair or Youth Committee Chair)
- The Pastor of St. Andrew's

Depending on the situation, appropriate action will be taken by church leaders and documented. The child of concern may be counseled along with the parent, but ultimately the child could be removed from the program.

**E. Weather:**

- If dangerous weather is predicted or is imminent, it will be the committee's decision regarding whether it is safe to meet or not. Ex. Icy roads, tornado watches, or warnings etc.

**F. Emergency Action Plans:**

**Tornado Plan:**

If a Tornado Warning is issued, leaders and staff are to seek shelter for their classes in the interior hallway of the Education Wing. Staff/leaders need to perform a head count as soon as possible and then line up down the sides of the walls in the hallway, kneeling and covering their heads with their hands for protection.

If children/youth are away from the church campus please utilize the following procedure:

- Identifying Shelter Locations:  
An underground area, such as a basement or storm cellar, provides the best protection from a tornado. If an underground shelter is unavailable, consider the following:
  1. Seek a small interior room or hallway on the lowest floor possible
  2. Stay away from doors, windows, and outside walls
  3. Stay in the center of the room, and avoid corners because they attract debris
  4. Rooms constructed with reinforced concrete, brick or block with no windows and a heavy concrete floor or roof system overhead

5. Avoid auditoriums, cafeterias and gymnasiums or other buildings that have flat, wide-span roofs

**Lockdown:**

Used when there is a threat of violence or serious incident that could jeopardize the safety of students/staff (i.e. intruder, active shooting, hostage incident, civil disturbances, etc.)

1. Leaders/Adults are to close their classroom doors (lock when possible), keeping children inside and quiet until further notice. If not in a classroom, leaders/children need to return to the nearest classroom or bathroom and remain until advised otherwise. Director or staff will lock building entrances.
2. Call 911
  - Identify the name and address of the church and describe the emergency, state the church is locked down, provide intruder description and weapon(s) if known, and identify the location of any/all children.
3. Leaders/Adults:
  - Clear the hallway moving everyone into the classrooms.
  - Lock your doors (if possible), turn off your lights, and shut your blinds and windows.
  - Move everyone away from the doors and windows.
  - Have all persons get inside the interior classroom or bathroom and sit down.
  - Lock the bathroom or classroom door. If the door does not lock, put a door stopper in the closed door.
  - If a life threatening situation exists, exit immediately to a place of safety.
  - Take attendance and be prepared to notify the Director of missing children or additional children, staff or guests sheltered in your classroom
  - Allow no one outside of the classroom until the Director or proper authorities (Police, Fire Dept., etc.) gives the "All Clear" signal.

**Emergency Action Procedures Evacuation:**

In the event of an emergency evacuation from the building (fire, flooding, structural damage, etc.):

Evacuation Plan for Kaleidoscope/Youth/VBS:

1. Please first COUNT your children to make sure that you have accounted for everyone in your care.
2. Line up children/youth.
3. Take the nearest/safest exit from the building.
4. Report to the far end of the parking lot.
5. Remain in the parking lot or other safe area until you are advised otherwise.

## Conclusion:

In all of our ministries with children and youth, this congregation is committed to demonstrating the love of Jesus Christ so that each child and youth will be “surrounded by steadfast love... established in the faith and confirmed and strengthened in the way that leads to eternal life.” (Baptismal Covenant II, *United Methodist Book of Worship*, p. 96)

Jesus said, “Whoever welcomes a child welcomes me” (Matthew 18:5). Children are our present and our future. Our hope, our teachers, our inspiration. They are full participants in the life of the church and in the realm of God.

**Adopted by St. Andrew’s UMC in 2021.**

## Appendix A

### DEFINITIONS

*NOTE: These definitions reflect our understanding of terms describing gender, identity, and sexuality, which are evolving as these model policies are being written.*

**Adult:** Anyone who is 18 years or older and not in high school.

**Bullying:** Behavior that intimidates, humiliates, offends, degrades, or harms another person, whether verbal, psychological, social, physical, or otherwise.

**Child:** Anyone under the age of 12 years.

**Child Protective Services:** A social services program provided by state and local governments serving children and their families who are in need of assistance. Child Protective Services receive and investigate reports of suspected abuse, neglect, and exploitation.

**Cisgender:** An adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender corresponds with their gender or sex assigned at birth. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

**Gender Non-Binary:** An umbrella term for people who identify their gender as neither male nor female. These people might identify as both (“bigender”), neither (“agender”), a mix between the two (“genderfluid”), or they can be unsure of their gender (“genderqueer”). This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

**Intake Officer:** The person(s) designated by a church to receive information regarding an offense for which a member of the clergy may be held accountable under, which sets out the disciplinary process for clergy. Anyone may contact an Intake Officer to report concerns.

**Leader:** A person, adult or youth, who, for the benefit of another, engages in ministry without responsibility for oversight of others engaged in that same ministry. Examples include Sunday school teachers, camp counselors, and program teams.

**LGBTQ+:** An acronym for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer/Questioning, and others. It refers to people whose gender identities vary from their gender or sex assigned at birth, or whose sexual orientations differ from the heterosexual majority. The “+” is an effort to include additional gender identities. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

**Mandated Reporter:** A person who is required by state law to report reasonable suspicions of abuse, neglect, and/or exploitation of vulnerable populations to the appropriate state agency. State laws vary greatly. Generally, state law mandates that either all adults or adults in certain professions report suspected abuse of children and/or youth. It is imperative to know the requirements of applicable state laws. Typically, individuals who are not mandated to report suspicion of abuse may make a report to the appropriate state agency, even though not legally required to do so.

**Off-Site:** Any location other than the sponsoring United Methodist Church, institution, facility, or campus.

**Organizations:** All institutions for which the congregations have legal or fiduciary responsibility (examples: conference & retreat centers, adult day care centers, retirement communities, religious orders, congregations, schools, etc.).

**Overnight:** Any event that starts on one calendar day and ends on a different calendar day.

**Pastoral Relationship:** Any relationship (1) between a Member of the Clergy and any person to whom the Member of the Clergy provides or has provided counseling, pastoral care, spiritual direction or spiritual guidance, or (2) between a lay minister and any person to whom the lay minister is offering prayer, ministry, and/or any person from whom the lay minister has received sensitive, personal, or confidential information in the course of offering ministry.

**Programs:** Official activities and programs sponsored by St. Andrew’s Methodist Church and its congregation.

**Public Records Check:** A search of documents and data available to the public including criminal and civil court records, credit reports, and driving records from the department of motor vehicles. Typically, such searches are conducted by a third party with expertise in this area.

**Responsible Person:** The person designated as being accountable for compliance with this policy for an event or program.

**Sexual misconduct:** A broad term encompassing any behavior of a sexual nature that is committed without consent or capacity for consent or by force, intimidation, coercion, or manipulation. Sexual misconduct can be committed by a person of any gender and it can occur between people of the same or different gender.

**Supervisor:** A person who has oversight responsibilities for a ministry program and/or Leaders in a ministry program.

**Transgender:** An adjective describing a person whose sense of personal identity and gender does not correspond with the gender or sex assigned to them at birth. This is an evolving term, as our understanding and language around gender identity and sexuality expands and matures.

**Training:** Organized activity designed to provide information and/or instructions to strengthen and enhance the recipient's understanding, capacity, and exercise of ministry.

**Universal Training:** A standard of training that will foster a culture of safety and inclusion for all people that includes a broad overview of issues of vulnerability, power, and healthy boundaries.

**Specialized Training:** A standard of additional training that equips people who participate in or have oversight responsibility for ministries. In addition to Universal Training, a person will have access to training that is specialized and tailored to their role and ministry function.

**Youth:** Anyone who is at least 12 years old, but not yet 18 years old. A youth may also be an individual who is 18 years old or older and still in high school.